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AUTHOR Miller, Gaylier E.
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ABSTRACT

In order to establish the need for a remedial writing program at Pensacola Junior College and to demonstrate the need for faculty released time for materials development, a diagnostic English skills test was administered to 215 freshmen. Test results showed 93% needed remediation. Questionnaire responses of English faculty members showed all 15 respondents in agreement that a remedial English program was needed. Most respondents found their present textbooks inadequate for remediation. Over half of the respondents agreed that those involved in the prospective writing lab should develop individualized materials and over half indicated interest in helping prepare such materials without released time; however, only one indicated time available for such an endeavor. On the basis of the findings, recommendations were that faculty members involved in Pensacola Junior College Writing Laboratory be granted released time for materials development; that effectiveness of the writing lab be evaluated regularly; that consideration be given to extending daily lab hours, to hiring additional personnel, and to opening a lab extension; and that other schools beginning remedial English programs consider the importance of prior planning regarding materials, staffing, and facilities. (Author/JF)

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A STUDY TO ASSESS STUDENTS' WRITING REMEDIATION
NEEDS AND A PLAN TO PROVIDE PERSONNEL AND
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TO MEET THOSE NEEDS

PERSONNEL

by

Gaylier E. Miller, M.A.
Pensacola Junior College

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The day that I started going to college. It was the happiest day in my life that I was on a college campus, but It is harder than I throught it would be. one of my subject is english, I never likeed english. The High School that I attend didn't teach you anything about topic sentence and outline, they just talk noun and verb and other thing, because I learn about noun and verb when I was in the fifth and sixth grade. when I come to college I didn't know anything about topic sentence and outline and I was completely lost

--One of many students

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to establish the need for a remedial writing program at Pensacola Junior College and to justify a need for faculty released time for materials development.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The community college began with a broad mission to "educate all people in the community, according to the needs of that specific community (Cowan:1975:3)." To fulfill this mission, the open-door community college, traditionally, consists of three divisions:

1. Transfer program--or first two years of baccalaureate study,
2. Career education--or two-year vocational training in various skills, and

3. Continuing education--or community interest courses, degree and non-degree (Cowan:1975:7).

Community colleges currently face problems which, if left unsolved, can seriously impair effectiveness in all three of these areas.

What began several years ago in various sections of the United States as random statements of mild dissatisfaction with the American educational system has resulted lately in both legislative acts and administrative decisions which directly affect community colleges. In 1976, the University of West Florida, where a large percentage of Pensacola Junior College's transfer students continue their education, began to test students in basic English skills. Students are required to answer correctly thirty-three out of fifty questions before they are allowed to graduate. According to a Pensacola News Journal article (October 24, 1977), the failure rate for fall, 1977, is approximately forty percent. The literacy cry has also resulted in a new Florida law which requires that all high school students either pass a literacy test or else be given a certificate of attendance rather than a high school diploma.

Pensacola Junior College is caught in the squeeze. To the uninformed, the answer to the dilemma may be simple: Deny entrance to the certificate bearing and fail those who do not score up to the university standards; decide who is to be admitted and who is to graduate on the basis of standardized tests. To those who feel that a community college should remain true to its purpose to serve all the community, however, this is not the solution. Not only does denying entrance and/or failing students refute the community college purpose,

it also seriously threatens to reduce enrollment. Drops in enrollment present other serious and obvious problems.

Another deceptively simple answer is often suggested by critics of education and, sometimes, by educators themselves: The community college English department should shift all its emphasis to teaching only those basic English skills which are being tested. Those who feel that an English department, as part of a community college, has a responsibility to all students in all three divisions, say this is not the answer either. Many college English instructors have stated, orally and in print, that if a college English department assumes as its primary duty the task of accomplishing what elementary and high schools have failed to accomplish, it will be denying its basic purpose and thus shortchanging all those students who do not exhibit severe language deficiencies.

Because community colleges over the nation have this problem, to a varying degree, and because many English departments are seeking solutions, various programs of remedial English have begun during the last several years. "Remedial English," then, is the answer offered by many institutions who still attempt to serve all the community (Roueche:1968:1-4).

Is remedial English the answer? According to one of many recent studies, the answer is, "Not necessarily." Bossone and Troyka report:

Colleges, faced with a rising number of underprivileged students, have hastily initiated and inadequately implemented remedial English programs. And where they have failed, the programs have been quietly abandoned without a single written record of their achievements or failures (Bossone:1976:89).

Calling a program remedial does not cause it to remediate. According to Kathleen Proia, "Most remedial programs that fail, that is, do not serve the students' needs, do so because they have been poorly planned or executed (Proia:1975:5)."

Effective remedial programs do not come prepackaged. They must be designed to meet each student where that student is and to build from there (Proia:1975). To remediate, then, a remedial program must be as flexible and adaptable as students' writing problems are various and individual. To accomplish remediation, any instructor, no matter how competent, needs materials to test, to teach, and to reinforce individual writing skills.

It is the judgment of this writer, along with many other instructors at Pensacola Junior College and elsewhere (Spooner-Smith: 1976) that textbook publishers have yet to produce an appropriate remedial text. Recently, this writer extensively surveyed some 150 different writing books, English handbooks, and programmed texts. Certain sections of the best fifteen of these books proved successful, to some degree, with some students enrolled in English 1103 (first term, freshman English). However, when the students were asked, near the end of the term, to identify the book(s) containing sufficient explanations and examples, they all agreed that none were adequate. In lieu of other obviously unfeasible and expensive options such as one-to-one tutoring, the need for suitable materials is paramount to the success of a remedial writing program at Pensacola Junior College.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A plethora of literature concerning the writing crisis has been published during the middle 70's alone. Causes for the crisis, the extent of the crisis, and its effects upon departments of English, along with various--often contradictory--remedies, have been offered by a multitude of speakers and writers. Lately, WHAT TO DO ABOUT WRITING has been the subject for discussion at the meetings of such distinguished groups as the Modern Language Association (Cowan:1975), the American College Testing Program (Huntley:1976), and the American Educational Research Association (Spooner-Smith:1976). The National Council of Teachers of English, in its College English and English Journal, regularly gives the topic extensive coverage. State English councils have recently devoted annual conferences and entire issues of their publications to THE DREADFUL STATE OF STUDENT WRITING (Reising:1975) (Proia:1975).

Recent Emphasis on Remedial English

All the concern about students' performance levels does not stem, of course, from within academe. A Wall Street Journal article (January 16, 1976) states:

To some underemployment merely reflects what they see as a general decline in the abilities that educational credentials represent these days. Personnel administrators, for example, complain that surprising numbers of applicants can't spell. . .

As one employer puts it, 'High-school diplomas just don't mean what they used to, and it's the same for college degrees.'

Of course, much of the concern and reams of the literature on the subject do come from within the ranks. More and more, the community college is pinpointed as having a special responsibility in this area. In an address to the South Atlanta Modern Language Association, Elizabeth Cowan says:

One of the indisputable facts of life for community college teachers is that while they teach a high proportion of very capable students, they also teach a large number of low achievers, and usually in the same class. Finding a way to bring these nontraditional students into the mainstream of college education has been and continues to be, therefore, a task with highest priority in community colleges' (Cowan:1975:9).

Speakers at various English conferences on state, regional, and national levels have recently voiced a need for the establishment of remedial English programs in college English departments. Some speakers and/or writers point out the dire need for more research on how to teach writing to remedial students (Applebee:1976) (Cowan:1975) (Williams:1977) (Roueché:1973). Others explore the difficulties involved in setting up remedial programs (McNett:1975). Yet others are most concerned with a testing method that will evaluate the effectiveness of such remedial programs (Proia:1975) (Tighe:1977). Some educators, speaking from experience, issue "pitfall" warnings to those involved in planning remedial writing programs. Invariably, these admonitions stress the necessity of designing programs and materials which fit the needs of particular students (Proia:1975) (McNett:1975) (Roueché:1973).

Attempts to Implement Remedial English Programs

Attempts to implement remedial English programs in community colleges actually began years ago. One such better known attempt was

DISTAR, which was designed to teach English to the culturally disadvantaged. Almost all critics agree that it was a dismal failure (Andrews:1977:80-81). Another failure was performance contracting, which was first used in Texarkana, Texas (Andrews:1977:79-80).

More recently, two researchers from City University of New York evaluated an experimental program of correlated reading and writing (Bossone and Troyka:1976). In 1975, William McNett published a dissertation on an endeavor to establish a sequential high school-college writing program. Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), along with individual and self-paced instruction, is reportedly working well at San Antonio Community College (Rudisill:1976). This same approach, on a more modest scale, has been used at the University of California, Riverside, and at other colleges (Zoller:1975). In two different books, John E. Roueche, Consulting Editor for Community and Junior Colleges, explains and evaluates remedial programs in ten different community colleges (Roueche:1972) (Roueche:1968).

Numerous writing laboratories are currently in operation in community colleges, and in universities as well, across the United States. All, presumably, operate with the intention of filling in the gaps that exist in their students' English backgrounds.

Need for Teacher-Made Materials

If anyone has discovered the right material for teaching developmental English among the hundreds of materials offered by publishers, he is keeping the information secret. In October, 1977, in a conversation with this writer, a representative of Little, Brown & Company stated that his company was in dire need of manuscripts and/or ideas on teaching remedial English.

A City University of New York professor maintains that English texts now in wide use, though perhaps effective for competent writers, are all "ill-suited for open admission men and women (Wiener:1975:28)."

Kathleen Proia, English Department Chairman at Strayer College in Washington, D.C., advises constant reevaluation of remedial English programs. She also states that professors who design and/or teach in such programs should be experienced in dealing with academically weak students and should be sincerely interested in helping bring these students up to freshman level (Proia:1975:4). She adds:

If reaching that aim requires writing course materials rather than selecting existing texts, or adopting in-class procedures that vary from the lecture method, then the professors of remedial courses must make those adjustments (Proia:1975:5).

Bossone and Troyka also stress the need for adequate materials to teach remedial writing (Bossone:1976). In an address to the Modern Language Association, Elizabeth Cowan commends those community college English instructors who "have learned the necessity of tailoring their teaching. . .to their variety of students (Cowan:1975:10)." In an address to a conference on College Composition and Communication, James Cooney said, "English teachers must begin to become more active in the development of curricula, courses, and programs (Cooney:1976:6)." In a "Report on the Status of Student Writing in the College," Roger Applebee says that "there is very little research extant on the teaching of writing," and that such research is badly needed, "particularly for those of varying levels of ability and achievement (Applebee:1976:49)."

Of the remedial programs which John Roueche investigated, one of the several conclusions which he draws is that faculties should develop materials to suit the needs of their students (Roueche:1973). In A Modest Proposal, he says it best:

Experimentation and innovation are desperately needed in the area of remedial education. . . Experimentation (should be) developed to facilitate individualized teaching so that each student's program could be designed with attention to what he already knows and needs to learn rather than accomodating the mythical remedial student. Junior college instructors and administrators need to explore more effective sources and programs if they are to justify the expenditure of time and money on a remedial teaching system which is proving to be ineffectual (Roueche:1968:53).

Need for Released Time

In order that a worthwhile, individualized remedial program may be implemented, some faculty member(s) should be given release time to prepare materials. There is, as has been established, a dearth of teaching materials for the underachiever. Printed matter which pleads for research and development of such materials, however, is rapidly weakening its impact by its very overabundance. Like many others, Roger Applebee, as spokesman for a Committee on the Use of English (Illinois University), bemoans the lack of effective programs. In the opinion of the committee, "given the staffing policies now in effect, both in rhetoric and verbal communication, and the lack of incentive through promotion, it is not likely that necessary research in writing can be accomplished (Applebee: 1976:49)." Numbers of recently published committee reports, conference speeches, English journals, and doctoral dissertations reiterate the sentiments of Applebee's committee. Obviously, it is easier to identify a need than it is to solve a problem. Obviously, it requires more time and effort to research and design an effective program than it requires to write about a need. Full-time teaching faculty members, busy with regular course planning, counseling, committee meetings and theme grading find only a free half hour here and there. Planning effective materials requires longer blocks of continuous time.

Most, if not all, of the developmental writing programs which profess success have behind that success some faculty members who devoted generous amounts of time and interest (Roueche:1973). Dow Mosley recently did a study on the need for faculty released time for curricula development in Pensacola Junior College's non-degree programs. Her survey of faculty and administration at Pensacola Junior College and at Forrest Park Community College confirmed her proposal (1977). A current example of such time being granted is the new English program at Valencia Community College (Florida). In response to mounting evidence that their remedial English courses were not adequate, the English Department at Valencia began to develop a new freshman English program. Realizing the enormity of their task and the necessity for planning a program which would not just look good in the catalog description, Don Tighe says:- "To get support, we went to our Faculty, Staff and Development Program (SPD Committee) and asked for released time for four instructors to write the course objectives, search for and develop materials, and plan for growth of what we believed to be a project with no end (1977:4)." After a great deal of persuasion, the SPD Committee gave "four instructors six hours released time for an entire semester (Tighe:1977:4)." The six hours referred to represent six hours per week released teaching time for each of the four instructors.

Conclusions

In a report entitled "How 'Not' to Teach Writing," John McKee explains six ways whereby an instructor can go from "first day in classroom to retirement without having to teach writing at all (McKee:1976:3)." This writer agrees with McKee that calling a writing course innovative or giving it a catchy name may often only cover up someone's laziness,

ineptitude, or lack of concern.

More than for any other program of a community college, there is a need for remedial English. In English, more than anywhere else in a community college program, there is a need for remediation. In remedial programs, more than in any other program, there is a need for adequate teacher-made materials and there is a need for time to prepare these materials. To this, Kathleen Proia adds that students should be made to

. . . feel as though there has been made a personal effort to help them with weaknesses in their educational background. It is that personal touch that so often can make the difference between the student with potential who ultimately realizes that potential or who simply drops out of college (Proia:1975:8).

It is essential that the teacher care!

RELATION TO PERSONNEL MODULE

This practicum is related to the personnel module because competent, dedicated instructors who have time to develop specific learning materials are absolutely vital to the success of any remedial English program. Before either remedial materials or personnel could be addressed, a needs assessment had to be conducted to determine remediation needs.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES DETERMINING REMEDIAL NEED

Subjects

The subjects consist of 215 freshmen at Pensacola Junior College. Each student enrolled in English 1103, spring term, 1978, was a candidate for this study.

Method

1. Each subject is enrolled in a daytime English 1103 class on the main campus.
2. Each subject is a full-time student.
3. Each subject is taking English 1103 for the first time.
4. Each subject has not received instruction in any type remedial English program at Pensacola Junior College or elsewhere since graduation from high school.

The first of the above criteria was established by examination of English 1103 class rolls. The other criteria were determined by a brief student questionnaire. Question 2 on the questionnaire asks whether a student has previously been enrolled in English 1103, but it fails to take into account students who enrolled but withdrew early in the term. A NO to question 2, therefore, did not exclude a student from this study (See Appendix A).

Although the subjects chosen are not homogeneous with respect to age, race, and sex, they all share the following characteristics:

1. Each subject has not had previous remedial help, nor has he received previous instruction in a college English class.
2. Each subject is a full-time day student enrolled on main campus, thus making it conceivable that, where such need is indicated, the student is available to receive offered remedial help.

Collection of Data

Each subject who met the criteria for this study was given a sixteen-item test which assesses skills in the following areas: subject/verb agreement, subject/pronoun/verb agreement, modification, pronoun usage, punctuation, succinctness, basic sentence structure, and commonly misused homonymns (See Appendix B).

Although the sixteen items do not test all writing skills, all the items assess skills which are commonly considered basic to acceptable written communications. Because subjects are instructed to rewrite each sentence, this test helps minimize chances of guessing. Chance of guessing is further minimized by testing of the same eight skills twice: Items 1-8 assess each skill (in the order noted above) and items 9-16 repeat the process.

The format of this instrument is adapted from the End-of-Year Examination in English for College Bound Students, Grades 9-12 (Princeton, 1963). According to the College Entrance Examination Board regarding this type test,

The advantages of this kind of language questions are the chances it offers for variety, range, and novelty in the items themselves; the demands it makes upon the active thinking and active writing skill of the student; and the fact that this kind of testing avoids the common practice of confronting the student with bad writing to which he is to apply first aid (Wolfe:1966:527).

Evaluation of Data

Subjects who wrote six or more of the sixteen sentences incorrectly were judged as needing remedial help. (This is approximately the same cut-off which The University of West Florida uses on its basic English skills test.)

DETERMINING MATERIALS AND RELEASED-TIME NEEDS

Subjects

The subjects for this investigation were fifteen both full and part time English faculty who teach on the main campus at Pensacola Junior College.

Method

Subjects were asked to respond to a questionnaire (See Appendix C) which determined: their opinions concerning the need for a remedial English program; their judgment of available remedial materials; their judgment of need for such materials; their interest, at the time, in helping prepare materials; the time they could devote to such preparation; if given released time, their willingness to help prepare remedial materials and their willingness to help instruct remedial students.

Analysis of Data

Answers to all items except number 4, answerable with textbook titles, and 10, answerable with a faculty signature, were tabulated according to number of faculty members choosing each response. The one answer to item 4 was investigated by the researcher. The names signed in response to item 10 were filed for possible future use. Items 11 and 12, concerning faculty members' interest in working in the Writing Laboratory, and not directly applicable to this study, were filed for use in a future study and for possible use by Pensacola Junior College's Writing Laboratory Director. Though the proposal for this study

stated that responses would be tabulated by percentage, the researcher found use of base ten numbers to be more feasible.

INVESTIGATING OTHER REMEDIAL WRITING PROGRAMS

Subjects

The subjects of this study were English departments and/or writing skills centers at the following community junior colleges:

1. Strayer College, Washington, D.C.
2. College of the Mainland, Texas City, Texas
3. Rainey Harper College, Chicago, Illinois
4. Golden West Community College, Huntington Beach, California
5. Wayne Community College, Goldsboro, North Carolina
6. El Centro Community College, Dallas, Texas
7. Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, New Jersey
8. Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, North Carolina
9. St. Petersburg Junior College, St. Petersburg, Florida
10. South Georgia College, Douglas, Georgia
11. Grand Rapids Junior College, East Lansing, Michigan
12. Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, Massachusetts

These colleges were chosen on the following bases:

1. A survey of recent literature reveals that each college has a remedial English program of some type, but the literature fails to supply sufficient information.
2. Each college represents a different geographic area, thus allowing for collection of more comprehensive data.

Method

Each subject was sent a letter (See Appendix D) requesting information regarding remedial writing programs. Answers to questions 4, 5, 6, and 7, all concerning student placement and evaluation, were not directly applicable to this particular study and were filed for use in a future study.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Diagnostic Test

Results of the diagnostic test (Appendix B) show that 93 percent of the 215 students participating in this study, because of failure to write correctly as many as eleven of sixteen sentences, are in need of remediation. Table 1, page 17, read vertically, indicates the scores of students by class section who participated in this study. Read horizontally, Table 1 indicates the total number, by rank, scoring in the possible range of 0 (all wrong) to 16 (all correct). The highest score attained by any student was 13.

This test is designed to assess only eight basic English skills: subject/verb agreement, subject/verb/pronoun agreement, modification, pronoun usage, punctuation, succinctness, basic sentence structure, and commonly misused homonyms (See Appendix B). However, since the instrument requires students to produce sentences of their own rather than to choose right answers, several additional student writing problems were revealed. In the thirteen sections tested, the following additional errors were common:

1. Lack of any end punctuation,
2. Failure or inability to read and follow directions,
3. Misuse of capital letters,
4. Insertion of inappropriate commas,

Table 1

DIAGNOSTIC TEST RESULTS

Class Section #:	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	335	336	378	379	Total making each score
Scores														
0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	11
1	0	5	4	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	16
2	3	0	4	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	17
3	3	2	2	2	3	0	1	4	2	1	4	1	1	26
4	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	0	2	0	2	1	17
5	1	1	3	0	3	2	4	2	1	3	5	3	2	30
6	2	1	1	2	4	3	4	1	3	1	1	3	1	27
7	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	18
8	4	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	0	2	0	21
9	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	8
10	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	8
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	4
12	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	8
13	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total per section	22	17	25	14	19	12	16	20	14	15	14	16	11	215* Total

Number needing remediation (scoring below 11): 201

Percentage needing remediation: 93%

*These 215 were selected as indicated by Appendix A

5. Misuse of possessives,
6. Misuse of quotation marks, and
7. Failure to copy correctly, which resulted in spelling errors and omission of words.

It was expected that the results of the diagnostic test would show that many Pensacola Junior College students need remediation in basic English skills; it was not expected that as many as 93 percent would show such a need.

English Faculty Questionnaire

(The text follows that of the questionnaire in Appendix C. NR means "no response.")

Questionnaires distributed: 17

Questionnaires returned: 15

1. As a classroom teacher, do you see evidence of a need for a remedial English program at PJC?
YES: 15; UNDECIDED: 0; NO: 0
2. Do you have (or have you recently had) any ENC 1103 or ENC 1136 students for whom your present textbook is either too difficult or is otherwise insufficient?
YES: 10; UNDECIDED: 2; NO: 1; NR: 2
3. Do you know of a published text which you can recommend as suitable for remedial students?
YES: 1; NO: 13; UNDECIDED: 1
4. If you answered YES to item 3, please name text:
(One respondent listed two books as possibilities.)
5. For use in a writing lab, do you think that a textbook is as effective as teacher-designed materials?
YES: 6; UNDECIDED: 5; NO: 4
6. Do you think that those of us involved in PJC's prospective writing lab should aim toward developing individualized materials?
YES: 8; UNDECIDED: 5; NO: 2
7. If YES, would you be interested in helping to prepare such materials?
YES: 4; PERHAPS: 4; NO: 6; NR: 1

8. If YES or PERHAPS to number 7, do you presently have time available which you can devote to this endeavor?
YES: 1; PERHAPS: 1; NO: 6
9. If you were given faculty-released time to do so, would you be interested in helping to prepare remedial materials?
YES: 4; PERHAPS: 4; NO: 5; NR: 2
10. If you answered YES to item 9, please sign your name:
(Six respondents signed.)
11. Would you be willing to work in the lab as a part of your regular schedule?
YES: 5; UNDECIDED: 1; NO: 9
12. Would you be willing to work with remedial students in addition to your regular schedule?
YES: 2; NO: 13

It was expected that a majority of the English instructors at Pensacola Junior College would agree that a remedial program was needed; it was not predicted, however, that one hundred percent would see evidence of such need. It was also expected that a majority would prefer teacher-made materials to published textbooks. However, though ten of thirteen definitely found their present textbook inadequate for remediation, only four preferred teacher-designed materials to textbooks for use in a writing lab. Only one of eleven respondents who preferred texts recommended any particular texts as possibilities. The two texts recommended were already familiar to this researcher. They are among those 150 texts referred to in Chapter 1 of this study which, though useful in part, do not contain adequate instructional materials for remediation in basic English skills.

Over half of the respondents thought that those involved in the prospective writing lab should aim toward developing individualized materials and only two thought this should not be done. Though over half indicated at least a possible interest in helping to prepare such materials, without

released time only one indicated available time for such an endeavor.

Letter to Other Community Colleges

(The text follows that of the letter given in Appendix D.)

Letters sent: 12
Letters returned: 8

1. Do you have a remedial English program? YES: 8
2. How long has your present remedial English program been in operation?
1 yr., 5 yrs., 7 yrs. (2 programs), 9 yrs. (2 programs), 10 yrs., 17 yrs.
3. What type follow-up do you have to test the success of your program?
Grades in other courses: 5; Grades while in remedial program: 2;
Students report back--informally: 2; None: 2. (Some reported using
all three methods above.)
4. How do you assign credit for the courses or other instruction which you
offer in this program?

Transferable college credit: 2
Non transferable credit: 6
Non credit: 0
Other: 1
5. If you answered OTHER to item 4, please explain: 8 hours remedial credit
applicable to B.S. degree
6. How are students selected for your remedial program? (Please X all
answers which apply.)
Standardized test: 6 Grades from high school: 2
Departmental test: 3 Previous test scores: 2
Other: 2 Voluntary basis: 5
7. If you answered OTHER to item 6, please explain:
Answers were: counselor and teacher referral, writing samples
8. Do you make more use of published textbooks or of other materials in
your remedial English program?
About half and half: 4; Use own program completely: 2; Use mostly
other materials: 1; Use text mostly: 1
9. If you use other materials as much or more than textbooks, did your
faculty develop these materials?
Yes: 4; Some of them: 2; Most of them: 2; No: 0
10. If you marked any one of the first three choices on item 9, did any
member(s) of your faculty receive released time to prepare these
materials?

Yes: 1; No: 7

11. If you answered YES to item 10, how many hours per week, and for how long, and to how many people was this released time granted?
2 people, 5 hours per week for 1 year
12. Please send to us any syllabuses and placement and/or evaluation tests which you have and do not mind sharing.
(One school sent a sample lesson and one sent a syllabus.)

It was predicted that well-developed and effective remedial writing programs more often use teacher-made materials rather than textbooks. Of the eight responding community colleges, all having had some type remedial writing program in operation from one to seventeen years, four use teacher-made materials as much as they use published texts, two use their own teacher-made programs completely, one makes little use of a published text, and only one uses a published text primarily with a teacher-made materials supplement. The respondent which makes primary use of a published text is one of the two respondents who indicated the absence of any type evaluation for effectiveness of remediation.

It was also expected that often faculty-released time was granted for materials preparation. Responses indicated, however, that only one writing program was developed under such conditions. To better understand this response, the answers to item 2 are relevant: Of the eight remedial programs, only one has been in operation for fewer than five years.

The syllabus and student guide sent by one writing center in response to item 12, though apparently well developed, does not speak to the specific remedial needs at Pensacola Junior College.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Evidence of remedial writing needs across the United State was documented in the literature. The purpose of this study was to establish the need for a remedial writing program at Pensacola Junior College. A diagnostic test of basic English skills, administered to first-term freshman English students, revealed 93 percent in need of remediation and proved beyond all expectations that a need for remediation does, indeed, exist. Ample evidence of such a need was further attested to by Pensacola Junior College faculty members.

This study also sought to justify use of teacher-made remedial materials in preference to currently published texts. Such justification, supported by current literature, was corroborated by the questionnaire responses of the Pensacola Junior College English faculty and was reinforced by the faculty involved in writing programs at eight other community colleges that were surveyed.

This study further attempted to justify the need for faculty released time for preparing remedial materials. Instances of released time allowance at other colleges were cited in the literature, and interest in preparing remedial materials only if released time were granted was indicated by English faculty members at Pensacola Junior College. A survey of eight other colleges, however, revealed that in only one instance had faculty released time been granted for materials development. However, it

is significant that seven of the eight programs investigated have been in operation for five years or more; doubtless they have had time for a gradual development of materials.

Evaluation and follow-up, particularly for remedial education, should be conducted systematically; but effective accountability procedures require time and expertise.

Implications

Since this study was proposed in November 1977, a writing laboratory has been instigated at Pensacola Junior College. This laboratory proposes to remediate basic English skills and to serve as a campus-wide writing resource center. At present, after four weeks in operation, the one-room lab, staffed by a director, one instructor, and two clerical assistants, regularly serves 143 students two or more hours a week. In addition to regularly scheduled students, a conservative average of 35 students drop in each week for consultation on particular writing problems. If doubt of the need had existed, this response would surely have resolved that doubt.

During the 1977 fall term, the two professionals on the lab staff prepared materials currently in use in the lab, in addition to full time teaching loads. The writing lab director, Mae Clemons, and the instructor, who is conducting this research, believe that these materials, assimilated under time pressure and without funding, will be less than adequate to meet the needs of the anticipated 1978 fall enrollment. Experience thus far in the laboratory indicates a pressing need for more extensive, self-instructing material to present such basic English skills as were tested in the Diagnostic Test (Appendix B).

Given present facilities and limited number of personnel, it is imperative not only that relevant, understandable materials be made available, but that they be organized so that students can use them with minimal individual instruction. To meet the needs of a large student population, the two professionals must minimize time spent in instructing students in how to use the laboratory materials in order to allocate time for discussing strengths and weaknesses in the students' individual writing.

Experts in the field of remediation warn constantly that though large numbers of schools have begun programs labeled remedial, more of these programs have failed than have succeeded. Pensacola Junior College does not need just another remedial program. If this remedial program is to be measurably effective, it must be sufficiently funded to provide adequate materials and staff. A staff of competent, dedicated, caring instructors who have time to meet each student's needs is perhaps more important in the remediation of English skills than in any other college program.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. One additional professional should be added to the writing laboratory staff on a temporary basis, and the two professionals presently on the writing lab staff should be granted half-time released time during summer terms IIIa and b for further materials preparation. In order to justify this need to administration, the staff members will keep a log of time presently used for material preparation in excess of the eight-hour daily contact with students in the lab.
2. The effectiveness of the Writing Laboratory should be evaluated regularly. Such an evaluation is now being planned.

3. Other schools beginning a remedial English program should consider the importance of prior planning regarding funding for faculty released time for materials development, adequate staffing, and physical facilities. Of equal pre-planning importance is a workable referral and scheduling system so that students attending the lab can be given the individual assistance that they need.

4. A survey should be made to determine need for and feasibility of

- a. extending hours of Pensacola Junior College Writing Laboratory from 8:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. daily to 6:30 or 7:00 P.M.
- b. establishing extensions of the Main Campus writing laboratory at Pensacola Junior College West Campus and at Pensacola Junior College Milton Center.

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STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please answer the following questions by placing an X beside the appropriate answer.

1. For how many credit hours are you scheduled this term?
Less than 12 _____ 12 or more _____
2. Is this the first term you have ever enrolled in English 1103?
YES _____ NO _____
3. Have you ever been enrolled in a freshman English course somewhere else?
YES _____ NO _____
4. Have you had any English course or any special tutoring in English since you graduated from high school? YES _____ NO _____

NAME

STUDENT NUMBER

DIAGNOSTIC TEST

DIRECTIONS: There are no errors in the sixteen items below. You are to rewrite each sentence, inserting, changing, or adding information which follows each sentence. Make any other necessary changes so that the sentences you write will also be correct.

1. Tom and his friend have not told the truth. (Begin with words Either Tom or his friend and leave out Tom and his friend.)
2. The new boys have finished their work. (Change The new boys to Each of the new boys.)
3. While Walt was shopping in the square, a peddler sold him a Turkish rug. (Change While Walt was shopping to While shopping.)
4. Our host liked us better than he liked them. (Change them to the first person pronoun.)
5. Men, who are egotistical, are always wanting to be flattered by women. (Use punctuation which any male would prefer.)
6. The teacher was pleased that for once each and every single one of all her students had punctually handed in on time his or her book report on Catherine Bowen's biography of the life of Justice Holmes. (Rewrite, cutting out all unnecessary words.)
7. Mary completed the work ahead of schedule, but John barely finished on time. (Change but to however and alter punctuation as necessary.)
8. (Write one sentence, correctly using the words they're and their.)
9. On the other side of the lake is a tavern. (Add the words a store, and a garage after tavern.)
10. All the students who plan to attend the dance must buy their tickets in advance. (Change All the students to The student.)
11. We borrowed a car from a friend. (Add the words that had piston trouble to the sentence.)
12. During Christmas vacation, some of us freshmen went to Chicago. (Rewrite, omitting the words some of and freshmen.)
13. John is known as an excellent ballplayer. (Change is to you are.)
14. Probably paying decent wages is usually the right system in the majority of cases. (Rewrite, eliminating unnecessary words.)

15. From the hill ahead came machine gun fire. (Add the words bodies began falling everywhere. Do not make two sentences.)
16. (Write one sentence using the words to and too correctly.)

1. As a classroom teacher, do you see evidence of a need for a remedial English program at PJC?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
2. Do you have (or have you recently had) any ENC 1103 or ENC 1136 students for whom your present textbook is either too difficult or is otherwise insufficient?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
3. Do you know of a published text which you can recommend as suitable for remedial students?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
4. If you answered YES to item 3, please name text:

5. For use in a writing lab, do you think that a textbook is as effective as teacher-designed materials?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
6. Do you think that those of us involved in PJC's prospective writing lab should aim toward developing individualized materials?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
7. If YES, would you be interested in helping to prepare such materials?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
8. If YES or PERHAPS to number 7, do you presently have time available which you can devote to this endeavor?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
9. If you were given faculty-released time to do so, would you be interested in helping to prepare remedial materials?

YES	UNDECIDED	NO
-----	-----------	----
10. If you answered YES to item 9, please sign your name:

11. Would you be willing to work in the lab as a part of your regular schedule?

YES

NO

12. Would you be willing to work with remedial students in addition to your regular schedule?

YES

NO

SAMPLE LETTER TO
OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES

37

ADDRESSED TO:

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The English Department at Pensacola Junior College plans to begin a writing laboratory early next year. I am investigating the remedial English programs at several other community colleges and I would appreciate any information you have which might prove useful to us. I am particularly interested in answers to the following questions:

1. Do you have a remedial English program?

☐ YES☐ NO

2. How long has your present remedial English program been in operation?

3. What type follow-up do you have to test the success of your program?

4. How do you assign credit for the courses or other instruction which you offer in this program?

Transferable college credit ☐Non-Transferable credit ☐Non Credit ☐Other ☐

5. If you answered OTHER to item 4, please explain:

6. How are students selected for your remedial program? (Please X all answers which apply)

☐ Standardized test☐ Departmental test☐ Other☐ Grades from high school☐ Previous test scores☐ Voluntary basis

7. If you answered OTHER to item 6, please explain:

8. Do you make more use of published textbooks or of other materials in your remedial English program?

9. If you use other materials as much or more than textbooks, did your faculty develop these materials?

☐ YES☐ some of them☐ most of them☐ NO

10. If you marked any one of the first three choices on item 9, did any member(s) of your faculty receive released time to prepare these materials?

_____ YES

_____ NO

11. If you answered YES to item 10, how many hours per week, and for how long, and to how many people was this released to granted?

12. Please send to us any syllabuses and placement and/or evaluation tests which you have and do not mind sharing.

Sincerely,

Gaylier Miller
Department of English
Pensacola Junior College



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

PENSACOLA JUNIOR COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

(904) 476-5410

40

1000 College Boulevard

Pensacola, Florida 32504

October 31, 1977

Dear Gaylier,

In working toward your doctorate from Nova University, I heartily endorse any research which you may be able to do regarding developmental English. As my assistant in our prospective writing laboratory, I know that you are as interested as I am in designing and preparing an effective writing program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mae Clemons".

Mae Clemons